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I can say this much on behalf of the Government that whenever funds permit Government will certainly take up questions of putting up new buildings and giving all facilities, whether in Rajahmundry, Ellore or Erode. It is only a question of funds. I do hope that ere long when Government is in a prosperous condition they will be able to devote some funds for construction of hospitals elsewhere. The second point raised by Mr. Nachiyappa Gounder was with regard to the present building. I believe it will be sold or put to some other useful purpose. I hope this explanation will satisfy my hon. Friend."

The cut motion was, by leave, withdrawn.

The demand was put and carried and the grant was made.

(4) GRANT XXXII—FAMINE RELIEF—RESERVED.

* The Hon. Mr. C. A. Souter:—" Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor I beg to move—

> '*that the Government be granted a further sum not exceeding Rs.* 14,39,800 *under Grant XXXII—Famine Relief—Reserved.*'

" Here again, Sir, the explanatory note [a] gives the reasons for this demand. The House is aware that there had been famine unfortunately in the districts of Anantapur and Bellary. When the budget was framed for the current year a sum of Rs. 1,25,000 was fixed for expenditure on famine. Very unfortunately, as we are all aware, famine lasted a considerable time and ended only with the rains which luckily fell in those districts during the months of August and September. The consequence is that we had to incur a further expenditure of Rs. 14,39,800 in these famine areas. This sum of course may be met, if this hon. House is pleased to pass the grant from the famine relief fund. The details of this expenditure would be found summarized at the very end of the note and it will be noticed there that something like 85 to 90 per cent of the money has been spent on actual relief works and gratuitous relief and only a little less than one lakh has been spent on establishment. I trust therefore this House will pass the demand. Sir, I move it."

* Mr. K. A. Nachiyappa Gounder:—" Sir, I beg to move—

> '*that the allotment of Rs.* 14,39,800 *under Grant XXII—Famine Relief be reduced by Rs.* 100 *to elicit information about the nature of the works done, estimated cost of the works, etc.*'

" In this connexion I cannot refrain from congratulating the Hon. the Revenue Member for the bold and very sympathetic move he made for the relief of the famine stricken area. It is very generous of him and the Government to rise to the occasion and relieve the suffering humanity of those parts. It has been very good of the Hon. the Revenue Member to have exceeded the allotment a great deal. But here having appreciated his liberality I want to know whether any substantial

[a] Printed as Appendix XII on pages 123–124 infra.

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works have been done in those areas or simply works like the putting up a road here and mending a tank there. That is the only point on which I like to have some information. So, Sir, I shall be quite satisfied if the Revenue Member furnishes such information as is available with him."

Mr. T. S. Ramaswami Ayyar:—"As regards this supplementary demand, Sir, we find that the supplementary demand is for a sum of Rs. 14 lakhs whereas the original demand itself is for something like a lakh. No doubt as the Revenue Member himself said, the prolongation of the famine conditions evidently necessitated the Government asking for a supplementary grant. I do not quarrel with the Government for asking the supplementary grant. But one fact that is noteworthy and that has to be taken into account by this Council is this. No useful purpose will be served by spending monies for famine relief by merely asking people to work on roads or tanks which just pays the labourers who are there. Government should have a special policy of preventing famine and trying to give relief when famine conditions prevail. Many hon. Members of this House have brought to the notice of the Government more than once that Government have not been following the right policy with regard to famine relief. In the Ceded districts there have been many projects which have not been taken up because the Government considered them as not remunerative. Criticism from this side of the House has always been, at least in the case of the Ceded districts which are considered a famine zone—a black spot in this Presidency—that the Government should not view the works merely from an economic point of view. Works should be taken up though they are not productive; they can be called protective works. This House will always be inclined to vote for large sums of money being spent if only Government will take up the execution of works in the Ceded districts which have been dropped merely because they are not productive and remunerative. From this, Government expects very big returns. It may be right in other cases, but where famine conditions prevail and you want to prevent famine, these principles should not be applied. I think, Sir, it is not right that in the twentieth century people should say that in the midst of plenty and when there is a fall in prices, one district should be suffering from want of foodstuffs. Now that the Tungabhadra Project is likely to be taken up, I am glad it will go a great way to relieve these districts in that area. But that is a very big project and will take long time to be finished. Meanwhile there are small projects and minor irrigation works which Government should take up immediately and execute. I find such works are not taken up by the Public Works Department because they do not come under the rules of the department. I think, Sir, these rules should be liberalized with a view to see that the Public Works Department spends money on irrigation works and not merely on quarrying or laying of roads. I think it is only tinkering with the main question. Government should certainly come forward with large schemes. When we have got ten-year plans and five-year plans put forward by Government, when large sums are available not only from

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this Government but from the Central Government, I do not see why Government should be niggardly in this matter. I certainly join my friend in thanking the Revenue Member for the generous manner in which he has come forward to give relief to the districts. But this is not the only way in which relief can be given. It is a much bigger question and cannot be tackled in the form in which it has been presented. Therefore I feel that Government should have a bolder programme and a forward policy with regard to the Ceded districts."

Rao Sahib V. I. MUNISWAMI PILLAI:—"I rise to support this demand, but I would like to point out that the note as presented is not complete in itself. We would rather like to have fuller details in respect of the road works and bridges that have been constructed and other details concerning the various works that are undertaken as famine relief measures. If it is not possible now, at least in the future years it may be given."

1-15 p.m. * The Hon. Mr. C. A. SOUTER:—"Mr. President, Sir, I may inform my hon. Friends, Mr. Nachiyappa Gounder and Mr. Muniswami Pillai, that I have myself visited practically every work which engaged the people in the famine areas. A large number of works consisted in the making of roads and bridges, but I cannot give straightaway what the proportion of the expenditure was on these items. But this I can say, that under the very close supervision of the Executive Engineer and the Famine Commissioner, all these works were carried out in an extremely thorough manner. I motored many miles myself on these roads and was struck with the admirable way in which the work has been carried out and I may assure the hon. Members that no money will be wasted. But apart from these road works, a very considerable number of village works were also put through, such as, village water-supply and so on. Under my orders, a considerable number of supply channels were put in good order. Also there were village relief works carried on. They consisted to a large extent in repairing the existing irrigation works. I think hon. Members must realize that in famine works we are dealing mostly with unskilled labour and not skilled labour, and if such work is undertaken in which masons and carpenters have to work, it would be a sheer waste of money.

"It must be remembered that we are dealing with very unskilled labour. In the district of Bellary, in the famine areas which consist entirely of black cotton soil, hon. Members will realize at once that minor irrigation works are practically non-existent. There may be tanks, but they are vakkaranis or small drinking water tanks which are not used for irrigation purposes at all. That leads me to one other comment, which is that the carrying out of a large programme of minor irrigation works there would probably be infructuous. Money spent on these schemes in the past, to our sorrow, has been wasted, and therefore any large scheme of carrying out minor irrigation works has to be very carefully considered with reference to

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catchment area, rainfall and other things. These districts cannot be compared with the other districts in the Presidency and any general remarks would not apply to them.

"As one hon. Member said, if the Tungabhadra scheme comes to completion, it will solve our difficulty and we shall be able to have an unfailing supply of water which under the present conditions we cannot possibly have. Hon. Members unacquainted with these districts may not be able to realize these difficulties. I may point out that the Government in the course of three years will be spending something like 50 lakhs of rupees in repairing the existing sources of irrigation. I understand from the Board of Revenue that the allotment for this year comes to Rs. 14 lakhs; to Anantapur alone they have allotted not less than Rs. 75,000. That is in addition to any money spent during the famine operations. When the Collector attempted to carry out some of these minor irrigation works in Anantapur from the special grant he could not get labour which probably will be forthcoming when agricultural operations have ceased. The difficulties in these areas are not difficulties which we generally meet in other parts of the Presidency, and the Government do all they possibly can with the material at hand to put through such measures as are feasible and not likely to be a failure. I hope, Sir, with these remarks of mine I have answered those criticisms which hon. Members have put forward and that this grant will be passed."

* Mr. K. A. NACHIYAPPA GOUNDER:—"I beg leave to withdraw my motion."

The cut motion was, by leave, withdrawn.

The demand was put and carried and the grant was made.

The House then adjourned for lunch.

After Lunch (2-30 p.m.)

VIII.—A BILL FOR THE IMPOSITION AND LEVY OF LICENCE FEES ON THE SALE OF TABACCO IN THE PRESIDENCY OF MADRAS (BILL No. 17 OF 1935).

* The Hon. Mr. C. A. SOUTER:—"Sir, I beg leave to introduce a Bill [a] for the imposition and levy of licence fees on the sale of tobacco in the Presidency of Madras (Bill No. 17 of 1935).

"Hon. Members will, I think, sympathize with me when I confess to a feeling of some diffidence in introducing a measure of taxation at a time when the general cry is for reduction of taxation; but I think this Honourable House, after hearing what I have to say, may perhaps think that my diffidence was misplaced (laughter) and that I have considerable justification in introducing this Bill, as I now do.

"In the Statement of Objects and Reasons attached to the Bill you have been given succinctly the Government's reasons for bringing

[a] Published in the *Fort St. George Gazette*, dated 8th October 1935.